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Letter dated 1 June 2000 from the Permanent Representative of Mali to the United Nations addressed to the President of the Security Council

I have the honour to transmit to you herewith the final communiqué of the twenty-third summit meeting of heads of State and Government of the Economic Community of West African States, held in Abuja on 28 and 29 May 2000.

I should be grateful if you would have this letter and its annex circulated as a Security Council document.

(*Signed*) Moctar **Ouane**
Ambassador
Permanent Representative

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Annex to the letter dated 1 June 2000 from the Permanent Representative of Mali to the United Nations addressed to the President of the Security Council

Twenty-third Summit of the Authority of Heads of State and Government of the Economic Community of West African States
Abuja, 28 and 29 May 2000

Final communiqué

I. INTRODUCTION

1. The Authority of Heads of State and Government of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) held its twenty-third ordinary session in Abuja, Federal Republic of Nigeria, from 28 to 29 May 2000. The meeting was chaired by His Excellency Alpha Oumar KONARE, President of the Republic of Mali and current Chairman of ECOWAS. The session coincided with the 25th anniversary of ECOWAS.

2. Present at the session were the following Heads of State and Government or their duly accredited representatives:

- His Excellency Mathieu KEREKOU
  President of the Republic of Benin,

- His Excellency Flight-Lieutenant Jerry John RAWLINGS
  President of the Republic of Ghana,

- His Excellency Dahkpanah Charles Ghankay TAYLOR,
  President of the Republic of Liberia,

- His Excellency Alpha Oumar KONARE
  President of the Republic of Mali
  Current ECOWAS Chairman,

- His Excellency Mamadou TANDJA
  President of the Republic of Niger,

- His Excellency Olusegun OBASANJO
  President of the Federal Republic of Nigeria,

- His Excellency Abdoulaye WADE
  President of the Republic of Senegal,

- His Excellency Ahmad Tejan KABBAH
  President of the Republic of Sierra Leone,

- His Excellency Gnassingbe EYADEMA
  President of the Togolese Republic,

- His Excellency Carlos Alberto Wahanon de Carvalho VEIGA
  Prime Minister of the Republic of Cape Verde,

- Honourable Lamine SIDIME
  Prime Minister of the Republic of Guinea
  representing His Excellency General Lansana CONTE
  President of the Republic of Guinea,

- Honourable Youssouf OUEDRAOGO
  Minister of Foreign Affairs of Burkina Faso
  representing His Excellency Blaise COMPAORE
  President of Faso, Chairman of the Council of Ministers
  Burkina Faso,

- Honourable Charles GOMIS
  Minister of Foreign Relations of the Republic of Cote d'Ivoire
  representing Brigadier Robert GUEI, Chairman of the NPSC,
  Minister of Defence,

- Honourable Dr. Momodu Sedat JOBE
  Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of The Gambia
  representing His Excellency Yahya A. J. J. JAMMEH
  President of the Republic of The Gambia,

- Honourable Mamadou Yaya DJALO
  Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Guinea Bissau
  representing His Excellency Koumba Yala Kobde NHANCA
  President of the Republic of Guinea Bissau,

3. The following personalities also attended the twenty-third session as observers:

- His Excellency Joachim CHISSANO
  President of the Republic of Mozambique
  Current Chairman of the Southern African development Community (SADC),

- His Excellency Thabo M'BEKI
  President of the Republic of South Africa,

- Honourable Sannu DA-Zowa Don ANGEL
  Prime Minister of the Republic of Equatorial Guinea
  representing the President of the Republic of Equatorial Guinea,
  Current Chairman of the Economic Community of Central African States,

- Honourable Nagoun YAMASSOUN
  Prime Minister of the Republic of Chad
  representing the President of the Republic of Chad,

- the Secretary-General of the Organisation of African Unity (OAU),

- the Executive Secretary of the Economic Community of Central African States (ECCAS),

- the Deputy Executive Secretary of the South African Development Community (SADC),

- the Assistant Secretary-General of the Common Market of Eastern and Southern Africa (COMESA),

- the Under Secretary-General of the United Nations,
  representing the Secretary-General of the United Nations,

- the President of the Commission of the West African Economic and Monetary Union (UEMOA),

- the President of the Committee of Governors of Central Banks of West Africa, Governor of the Central Bank of West African States (BCEAO).

4. The list of other participants is attached as an annex.

5. Various Heads of State and Government delivered addresses delivered at the opening ceremony, in which they reiterated their commitment to building a strong ECOWAS in order to make it an effective instrument in the effort to promote the integration of the West African economies and reverse the sub-region's current state of under-development.

6. Heads of State and Government of friendly countries delivered goodwill messages.

II. HOMAGE TO VICTIMS OF CIVIL WARS IN AFRICA

7. The Authority observed a minute of silence in memory of all victims of civil wars throughout Africa. It expressed special appreciation to ECOMOG and to its gallant soldiers who lost their lives fighting for peace.

III. CELEBRATION OF THE 25TH ANNIVERSARY OF ECOWAS

i) Homage to Founding Fathers of ECOWAS

8. The Authority expressed its profound gratitude to the Founding Fathers of ECOWAS for their priceless contribution to the promotion of unity, solidarity and integration in West Africa. It also expressed its gratitude to those amongst the Founding Fathers who were present at the twenty-fifth anniversary celebrations: Their Excellencies Gnassingbe Eyadema, President of the Togolese Republic, Mathieu Kerekou, President of the Republic of Benin, and General Yakubu Gowon, former Head of State of the Federal Republic of Nigeria. In recognition of their contribution to West African integration, each of these three Founding Fathers was presented with a commemorative plaque.

IV. THE AFRICAN UNION

9. Heads of State and Government celebrated the 25th anniversary of ECOWAS on the theme of accelerating the march towards the African Union as their guiding principle. They exchanged views with their peers from other regional economic communities in Africa on their ideas about the long and varied experience ECOWAS has garnered ,and on the prospects for the African Union.

10. Recalling the historic decision adopted by the Syrte summit (Libyan Jamaihiria) , Heads of State and Government again stressed the fact that only by designing and executing their programmes within the framework of the African Union could regional economic communities hope to become really meaningful.

V. ECOWAS INTEGRATION PROGRAMMES

11. The Authority adopted the report of the Executive Secretary, the report of the Committee of Governors of Central Banks and the report of the forty-sixth session of the Council of Ministers on ECOWAS priority programmes concerning the implementation of the conclusions of the ECOWAS-UEMOA ministerial meeting held in Bamako in January 2000, the second ECOWAS monetary zone, establishment of a borderless ECOWAS, and the enhancement of the financial resources of the ECOWAS Fund.

VI. INTRODUCTION OF AN ECOWAS PASSPORT

12. The Authority adopted and launched the uniform format passport meant to demonstrate our ECOWAS identity before the whole world and to establish the fact of Community citizenship. The ECOWAS passport will be issued in Member States alongside the travel certificate which will remain valid. There will be a transition period of five (5) years during which the ECOWAS and the national passports will be used side by side . National passports will cease to be valid at the end of the five years.

VII. INSTITUTIONAL MATTERS

i) Community Court of Justice

13. The Authority urged all Member States to communicate to the Executive Secretariat the names of their candidates for judges to sit on the Community Court of Justice as soon as possible, in conformity with the procedure set out in the relevant protocol. It was decided that the headquarters of the Community Court of Justice would be determined after due consultations among the Heads of State.

ii) Community Parliament

14. The Authority expressed satisfaction at the entry into force of the Protocol relating to the Community Parliament, thus making it possible to effectively establish this important Community institution.

15. Heads of State and Government requested all national parliaments to designate their representatives to the Community parliament, in accordance with the provisions of the protocol.

16. The Authority shall decide the duration of the transition period at the end of which the citizens of Member States will elect legislators and alternate members through universal suffrage, in accordance with the provisions of the protocol.

17. The Authority decided that the headquarters of the Parliament shall be chosen after due consultations among Heads of State and Government.

VIII. TRAFFICKING IN CHILDREN

18. The Authority requested the Minister of Foreign Affairs of Benin to establish contact with the Executive Secretariat and provide it with the necessary information required by the Community for adopting concrete measures on controlling child trafficking.

IX. WAR AFFECTED CHILDREN

19. The Authority recalled the declaration of ECOWAS Ministers of 28 April 2000 at Accra on war-affected children and directed the Executive Secretary to establish a mechanism to monitor the implementation of the said declaration. He was also directed to submit proposals for the adoption of sanctions to ensure that offenders receive appropriate punishment.

X. ESTABLISHMENT OF A CRIMINAL INTELLIGENCE BUREAU

20. Heads of State drew attention to the menace of various forms of economic and white-collar crimes which have serious socio-economic consequences in West Africa. They expressed gratitude to President Jerry John Rawlings for his initiative to develop a regional mechanism for fighting the crime. The Executive Secretary was requested to work closely with the Ghanaian authorities to draft the statutes of the proposed Criminal Intelligence Bureau to be submitted for adoption by the Community.

XI. REGIONAL PEACE AND SECURITY

i) Situation in Sierra Leone.

21. Heads of State and Government endorsed the conclusions of the Committee of Heads of State and Government on Sierra Leone, which met in Abuja on27 May 2000. They strongly condemned the taking of hundreds of the members of the United Nations Mission to Sierra Leone (UNAMSIL) hostage by members of the Revolutionary United Front. They congratulated President Charles Ghankay Taylor on the speed and effectiveness of his actions in the execution of the mandate given to him by his colleagues. They expressed their gratitude to the Liberian President for sparing no effort in securing the release of a large number of the hostages, and renewed his mandate to use his good offices in obtaining the release of the remaining hostages and the recovery of the arms seized.

22. Heads of State and Government decided to ensure the safety of Corporal Foday Sankoh, outside the territory of Sierra Leone.

23. They called for the immediate and unconditional release of all hostages and their equipment.

24. They also demanded the disarmament, demobilisation and reintegration of all unofficial armed groups.

25. The Heads of State and Government agreed that the Revolutionary United Front Party should participate fully in all political activities, since it is a registered political party.

26. They further called on the Government of Sierra Leone to exercise its authority and control over the entire country.

27. The Heads of State and Government expressed the hope that Sierra Leone will maintain fraternal and cordial relations with its neighbours.

28. Heads of State and Government expressed their appreciation to all friendly countries which, in one form or the other, assisted Sierra Leone and the sub-region to maintain security in Freetown during the recent resurgence of fighting in that country. They expressed the wish that, in the future, any intervention by friendly countries should be endorsed by the UN, OAU and ECOWAS.

29. They agreed that the security of Sierra Leone would gradually be transferred to the country's Armed Forces, and all foreign troops and agencies would be withdrawn.

30. Heads of State and Government agreed to conduct a regional enquiry into the renewal of hostilities . They also agreed to undertake a regional study on the illegal trade in diamonds.

31. In order to enable ECOWAS to fix a date for a cease-fire designed to put an end to the fighting in Sierra Leone, it was agreed that a committee of six ECOWAS Member States, namely Ghana, Guinea, Liberia, Mali, Nigeria and Togo, as well as the ECOWAS Executive Secretary, will be sent to Sierra Leone without delay.

32. The Committee was mandated to make contact with all the parties concerned and prevail on them to redeploy to the positions held as at 7

July 1999, the date of signature of the Lome Peace Accord. Heads of State and Government called on the RUF forces to disarm and demobilise voluntarily.

33. Heads of State and Government also reaffirmed their full support for the peace process in Sierra Leone, as provided for by the Lome Peace Accord. They called on the RUF party to abide by the terms of the Accord which provides an appropriate framework for the resolution of the Sierra Leonean conflict. They decided that troops should be provided from the sub-region to beef up the United Nations Mission to Sierra Leone (UNAMSIL), and that the current Chairman should prevail upon Member States which had pledged to provide contingents to honour their commitment. They requested that the UNAMSIL mandate should be changed from peace-keeping to peace-enforcement and also expressed the desire to have the command of UNAMSIL given to a West African officer.

ii) Situation in Cote d'Ivoire.

34. Heads of State and Government took due note of the timetable announced by the Ivorian government for the holding of elections, which is as follows:

- 23 July 2000 - referendum,
- 17 September 2000 - 1st round of presidential elections,
- 8 October 2000 - 2nd round of presidential elections,
- 29 October 2000 - legislative elections,
- 19 November 2000 - municipal elections.

35. Heads of State and Government expressed their readiness to assist Cote d'Ivoire to keep within the established timetable. They requested the Ivorian government to create an enabling environment within the country for the successful organisation of these elections.

iii) Situation in Guinea-Bissau.

36. Heads of State and Government expressed concern over the tension between His Excellency, Koumba Yala Nhanca and the former junta. They recalled that the President of the Republic of Guinea-Bissau had come to power following elections recognised as free, fair and transparent by the international community.

37. Heads of State and Government decided to dispatch a fact-finding mission to Guinea-Bissau as early as possible and requested the current Chairman to take necessary action in this regard.

38. The Chairman of the Mediation and Security Council at Heads of State and Government level informed the Authority of the outcome of the inaugural meeting of the Council which took place in Abuja on 27 May 2000. Essentially, the meeting discussed the Rules of Procedure of the Council, the lifting of sanctions imposed on Liberia, the transfer of the powers of the ad hoc committees to the Mediation and Security Council and the military awards for military personnel who participated in peacekeeping operations in Guinea Bissau and Sierra Leone. Heads of State adopted the recommendations of the Security and Mediation Council.

XII. VOTE OF THANKS

39. Heads of State and Government expressed their profound gratitude to His Excellency Alpha Oumar Konare, President of the Republic of Mali, current Chairman of ECOWAS for his exemplary leadership role in the pursuit of West African integration.

40. Heads of State also expressed their sincere appreciation to His Excellency President Olusegun Obasanjo, President of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, and to the Nigerian government and people for

warm, brotherly welcome accorded them and for the excellent facilities placed at their disposal during their stay in Nigeria.

33. The Authority congratulated the Executive Secretary and his entire staff for their commitment to forging a more virile ECOWAS and for their excellent organisation of the twenty-fifth anniversary celebrations.

Done at Abuja on 29 May 2000